

to the Senate minority leader regarding the Global Food Security Act, S. 384, printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
May 27, 2010.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Senate Minority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR MCCONNELL: I recently objected to a unanimous consent request to pass S. 384, the Global Food Security Act.

As you will recall, I sent a letter to the entire Senate at the beginning of this Congress in which I outlined four basic principles that would give me cause to object to any legislation that violated them. Among them are the principles that any new spending commitment authorized must be paid for by reducing spending in other areas of the federal budget and that any new programs or initiatives should not duplicate existing ones.

Along these lines I have two primary concerns with S. 384. First, according to the Congressional Budget Office, this bill will cost taxpayers \$6.5 billion; yet, the legislation provides no offset to avoid increasing our national debt, which recently reached \$13 trillion.

Second, it appears several components of S. 384 may overlap with existing federal programs and authority relating to agricultural assistance and research. For example, S. 384 creates the Higher Education Collaboration for Technology, Agriculture, Research and Extension program (HECTARE), which authorizes research and teaching activities for academic exchanges for students, faculty, extension educators, and school administrators. However, according to the Congressional Research Service, this section overlaps with several programs at the Department of Agriculture (USDA). Specifically, USDA already has research, extension and teaching activities authorized in Section 1458 of the 2008 farm bill. Other farm bill programs, such as the Competitive Grants for International Science and Education Programs (Sec. 1459A), the Borlaug International Agricultural Science and Technology Fellowship Program (Sec. 1473G), and the Cochran Agricultural Fellowship Program for Middle Income Countries, Emerging Democracies and Emerging Markets (Sec. 1543) also authorize USDA to carry out the kinds of activities that would be funded by the HECTARE program.

Additionally, this bill adds new provisions and authority for conservation farming and other sustainable agriculture techniques. At the same time, USAID already operates the Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Collaborative Research Support Program, which American universities carry out to support sustainable agriculture research and natural resource management internationally. USAID also operates the Consultative Group on Program, which American universities carry out to support sustainable agriculture research and natural resource management internationally. USAID also operates the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), which is an alliance of international agricultural centers that mobilizes science to benefit the poor by promoting conservation and sustainability of natural resources and biodiversity. Further, the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service conducts an International Technical Assistance program. Through this program, the U.S. provides technical assistance internationally to enhance conservation and management of natural resources. Finally, one

component of USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service's mission is to provide food aid and technical assistance in foreign countries.

The statutory authorities to implement these initiatives already exist. Congress should conduct better management of programs already authorized rather than create new ones as outlined in S. 384. The past failures of Congress to streamline federal programs where appropriate have resulted in a vast expansion of our government, often to the detriment of taxpayers and in violation of the principles set forth in the U.S. Constitution.

During this time of national economic unrest, Congress must do the hard work of paying for its commitments rather than passing along debt to future generations and risking financial collapse. Additionally, Congress must first evaluate existing programs to eliminate or consolidate overlapping functions before it creates new programs or embarks on new initiatives.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have. Thank you for your service to our country.

Sincerely,

TOM A. COBURN,
U.S. Senator.

RECOGNIZING AMBASSADOR JEAN KENNEDY SMITH AND VSA

Mr. DODD. Madam President, I wish to recognize VSA, the International Organization on Arts and Disability. VSA is an affiliate of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and was founded in 1974 by Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith—a pioneering leader in the area of access and inclusion in the arts for children with disabilities. For over three decades, she has blazed the trail for VSA to become the preeminent international organization on arts and disability. As a result of Ambassador Smith's tireless efforts and sustained vision, VSA is changing perceptions all over the world about people with disabilities. Each year, 7 million people of all ages and abilities participate in VSA programs in dance, music, drama and the visual arts.

Ambassador Smith and VSA have created an extraordinary network of educational resources, programs, festivals, and services that bring the arts into the lives of individuals of all ages—with and without disabilities. VSA programs occur in schools, community centers, hospitals, performing arts centers, art galleries, and college and university campuses. They involve teacher and artist training programs, the development and distribution of educational resources, and performance and exhibition opportunities for individuals of all ages. Through the development, implementation, and dissemination of model programs and initiatives, VSA helps acknowledge the importance of the arts in academic and vocational achievement for individuals of all abilities. These programs operate in all 50 states and in 51 countries around the world.

From June 6 to 12, more than 2,000 people will convene in Washington, DC, to celebrate Ambassador Smith's vision and to share their talents and accomplishments with all of us. From the

Kennedy Center, to the Smithsonian Institution, the Shakespeare Theatre Company, Union Station, AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center, and many venues in between, performances and exhibitions will showcase the work of these outstanding artists and provide first-rate entertainment to residents of the Washington metropolitan area as well as visitors from around the world.

Among the professional artists who will lend their talents to this extraordinary gathering are world-renowned artists Dale Chihuly, Dame Evelyn Glennie, Patti LaBelle, Salif Keita, Marlee Maitlin and architect Michael Graves.

As part of the festival, hundreds of educators, policymakers, parents, and disability advocates will convene for the International VSA Education Conference, which will feature sessions that provide participants with tools and resources to advance inclusive education in their own communities.

Countless individuals have worked tirelessly for many years to create and expand the diverse programming and rich history of VSA. The leadership that Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith has provided for more than 35 years has inspired those efforts and made these many accomplishments possible. The 2010 International VSA Festival is a tribute to her and to those individuals who embraced her vision and shared her passionate belief that all people should have the opportunity to participate in the arts. In honoring VSA and the work done by Ambassador Smith, we recognize the magnitude of her mission, and the importance of the arts not only for individuals with disabilities, but in all of our lives.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

STAFF SERGEANT EDWIN RIVERA

Mr. DODD. Madam President, today I have a heavy heart to mark the passing and commemorate the life of SSgt Edwin Rivera, a native of Waterford, CT, who lost his life in Afghanistan last week at the age of 28.

Staff Sergeant Rivera, the only son of middle-class Puerto Rican parents who came to Connecticut in the 1970s, graduated from Waterford High School in 2000. And they were proud of young Edwin, who served his first deployment in 2006, even as they missed his presence.

"The center of the family shifts back to my house when Edwin is gone," his mother said.

He was gone for 15 months, not the promised 12. And when he came home, he was changed by what he had seen. But he soon became the lively, committed family man, seeing his two sons, Rolando and Lorenzo, off to school, working at the Millstone nuclear powerplant, starting a new life with his wife Yesenia.

Last summer, however, he told his mother that he still thought about the sad faces of the children he had seen in Afghanistan, the children who couldn't